

April 24, 1987

APR 30 1987

Andrea Beatty Riniker, Director
Washington Department of Ecology
Mail Stop PV-11
Olympia, WA 98504-8711

Superfund Branch

Re: Your letter dated April 17, 1987 to "Concerned Citizens"

Dear Director Riniker,

Let me introduce myself - My name is (b) (6) and I am a member of the Colbert Landfill Contaminate Area Committee, Colbert, Washington. This, however, is a personal letter from me.

Your letter of April 17, 1987 could not have been received at a more opportune time. You are asking us to voice our concern regarding legislation to deal with hazardous waste sites across the state. I can certainly appreciate your feeling of urgency regarding this bill; however, all the legislation in the world is worthless if it is governed by an agency that cannot work harmoniously within itself.

You talk of concern. I feel I must ask you this question - Where is the concern by some of your employees for us? Surely, the first priority of all of the employees of the WDOE should be concern for the health of the citizens of the state - not concern for their own personal gain. Everyone has personal goals but the quest to attain those goals should not jeopardize the welfare of a whole community. No one person should have the power to hold a community as a hostage in order to extract ransom from a fellow employee. Strong words and implications? Yes, but this is what I see happening with the Colbert Site.

Fred Gardner, the Site Manager for the Colbert project, has shown the utmost concern and respect for us as a community and Committee. He has taken extra time to meet with our Committee to help us understand the proceedings regarding the Remedial Investigation (RI) and the Feasability Study (FS) and has kept us informed of the progress of these reports. He has tried to create a working relationship with the FRPs. He has helped our Committee accomplish a goal that would have been unattainable without his aid.

We have all been unhappy with the delays regarding the RI and FS. The people in the affected area have turned to their attorneys and have filed suit after suit against the FRPs because of the frustrations regarding this contamination. The Site Manager has made it plain to me that he accepts the responsibility for these delays - up to a point!

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It is my understanding that the FS has been ready for finalization since early to mid. February. Approval was needed to continue on to the next step - that of sending it out to the Concerned Citizens. A piece of cake, you say? So we thought - until last week! This project has been held hostage all this time - approval withheld until certain "conditions" were met. What "conditions"? I ask you to check into this.

It would appear that there is no authority given to the Site Manager to implement decisions regarding the site. They seem to have all the responsibility for the site but none of the decision making authority. They are the ones who are criticised by the Concerned Citizens and the PRPs. I cannot believe that these problems are unique with the Colbert Site alone.

Another concern I have is why these Major sites have no priority in the "Contract Area"? Isn't the Colbert Site on the National priority list? Doesn't over 7 years of concern and anxiety in the community account for anything? Is it the policy of the Contract Section to have the Site Managers "take a number and wait"? I am not aware, either, that there is a financial hold-up with the Colbert Site because of the fact that Federal Superfund money is allocated for this Site.

Even though the problems regarding the contract extensions for this Site are apparently being resolved at this time, this is just a temporary band-aid. What is going to happen when the Design Period and Construction Phase come up against the same problem? More hostage/ransom syndrome? More contract area problems? Is the flow of contaminant in the ground water going to sit and wait? Of course not. It is going to continue on its merry way - into more and more private wells.

I am sure in my own mind that I personally will not be 100% satisfied with the Remedial Action that will be recommended in the FS. I am sure that you will find others with varying degrees of dissatisfaction. It is my understanding that it will be at least two more years before this project is completed and the Remedial Action is in service. We must be assured that we have a continuing, comfortable working relationship with the Site Manager in order to discuss all aspects of the FS, Design Period and Construction Phase with him. We need to know that he can indeed make decisions relevant to the problems we will face. We need to be assured that his "Support Sections" are just that - for his support and our best interests.

In your letter you state that "Without a bill, it will not be possible to effectively complete work on the 158 contaminated sites across the state." I think "effectively" is a key word here. I don't believe this or any other bill will cure the problems I have mentioned. Nothing can be done "effectively" without cooperation and harmony within. It is time for the Concerned Citizen to be shown some Concern by a few more individuals within your agency.

Having worked many years for the State and Federal Government myself, I am aware of the type of problems your people face. I am not unsympathetic to them. You might think that I have been unduly harsh in my criticism. I am not an activist nor do I tend to get on "band wagons!" However, I sincerely feel the need for community involvement in this issue and the problems that will continue to arise in the future regarding the Colbert Site. Please feel free to contact me, if you wish, after you have looked into my concerns. I would be most happy to meet with you whenever you are in the Spokane area. Our concerns are many and do not include the WDOE alone.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Colbert, WA 99005

(b) (6)

P.S. I am curious to know how our address was obtained for the mailing of your letter. I feel safe in assuming that it was obtained from the mailing list for the Colbert Site. Our name is on that list for the express purpose of our being in a position to receive information regarding this Site. We will be most unhappy should we find that our name has been given out for other political purposes, which I feel is a category your letter of April 17, 1987 might fall into.

cc:

Hon. Thomas S. Foley

Booth Gardner, Governor

Fred Gardner, Site Mgr., WDOE

Craig Costello, Chairman, CLCAC

✓ Neil Thompson, EPA

Golder Associates

Spokane County Commissioners

Key Tronics, Corp.

Whitworth Water Dist. #2